Department of Technology Services
Technology Advisory Board Meeting
December 19, 2005

Attendees: Tani Downing, Steve Fletcher, Stephen Hess, Ed Ekstrom, Martin Frey, Representative Dave Clark via teleconference

Guests: Greg Gardner, Greg Mead, David Fletcher, Jolet Olsen, Randy Hughes, Lloyd Johnson, Dave Burton, Jim Matsumura, William Shiflet

Ed Ekstrom welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda. He then made a motion to approve the November 30, 2005 meeting minutes. Steve Fletcher seconded the motion, which was then approved by the group.

Strategic Plan
A draft of the Strategic Plan was distributed to the committee. Steve Fletcher explained to the committee that the draft is not a finished document and that additional information is needed, specifically from the agencies so the plan can be completed and will be a more valuable document. Also, the initiatives are not directly tied to the agencies business needs. Steve would like to tie the plan more closely with the business needs of the agencies.

Ed asked if Steve would like additional information and assistance would help to get the plan completed. Steve said that assistance from the agencies would be very helpful. Ed then asked if there are any initiatives within the plan. Steve mentioned there are initiatives within the plan, however, he would like to tie the information together and relate each initiative to an agency objective / business need. Tani Downing cautioned that projects like the data warehouse are great projects but may create security concerns and that some data cannot be shared. So we must be careful when we identify projects like the data warehouse which can cause some partners to pull back due to confidentiality concerns and requirements.

Ed Ekstrom asked if Steve was interested in finding the lowest common denominator so initiatives can be identified. Steve Fletcher said that is exactly what he would like to do. Steve Hess asked if the problem being discussed is an IT governance issue. Ed said he did not believe it was a governance issue. Martin Frey described recent experiences within General Motors and how they gathered individuals from across the organization to identify IT projects and serve as IT enablers. Steve Hess said that they have a similar process at the University of Utah and a group of college heads makes up the board. Steve Fletcher asked if the board is all IT people or business people. Steve Hess said that it depended on the project and the area where the person came from; however, there was generally a mixture of business and IT. Tani Downing said that DWS has a similar process and asked Greg Gardner to describe the board. Ed asked if DWS uses a defined process. Greg said that an established process was utilized for prioritizing all projects. Tani said the advantage of their process is that business drives IT rather than the other way around. Additionally, the number of efficiencies that have been realized with this process/board is very impressive.

Ed then asked which initiatives are more pressing. Steve Fletcher said that there are many initiatives that are directly related to the transition and they are more pressing than others.

Likewise, there are a number of projects that will improve the infrastructure and enable all to have more services and be more efficient. Steve Hess asked if the projects were listed in the plan. Steve Fletcher said they are but many are not driving the direction of DTS. The plan provides a lot of information to help identify all of the activities within DTS.

Ed said that we must be careful when reviewing the initiatives because they fit in many different categories including: projects that probably shouldn't go forward because of flawed design, projects that are more important to one agency then another, the projects that try to be all things to all people and the initiatives that are well funded and the sponsor is willing to pay anything to get it to moving. Steve Hess said that it would be helpful to have the agencies to participate in the prioritization process for all of the initiatives. Steve Fletcher said that he agreed and felt that should be a requirement. Tani mentioned that a similar process was used during the budget development at GOPB and that it was very helpful. Ed suggested that a list of initiatives should be developed and the agencies should be brought together to help identify which initiatives should be given priority. Ed said that this may be an opportunity to bring in a consultant to identify initiatives. Martin Frey said that a consultant would be very helpful; however, a strong process auditor would benefit the entire state. A process auditor could look across the entire state and identify all of the processes that could be improved through automation. Tani Downing identified how such a process helped DWS to become more efficient and gave the example of ESS, which helped to free up 4 FTEs.

Ed asked if there are any initiatives that should be pursued now. Steve Fletcher said that there are some items that could be pursued now. Ed stated further that the process could be tested on those items first; however, DTS should be careful to leave the more difficult initiatives for later. Tani Downing suggested that DTS should look for other quick wins that can be taken to the enterprise level. Martin Frey agreed and said that perhaps every agency should be surveyed to identify their top solutions that could be taken to the enterprise level. The committee agreed. It was determined by the committee that each agency should recommend their top three initiatives, including identify funding sources and budget for their initiatives and explain why they are important. Steve Fletcher agreed to take on the assignment to gather the initiatives from each agency, how the projects could be funded, and why the initiative is important.

Tani Downing asked if IT Planet is still being used. Dave Fletcher said that IT Planet was abandoned about three years ago. Tani said that when she was in the Legislature it seemed to be very helpful. Steve Fletcher said he will investigate IT Planet to see if it would make sense to bring back.

Service Level Agreements
Steve Fletcher explained how DTS is proceeding with the SLAs and how the first step is to identify where everyone is today. The next step is to identify where everyone needs to be in the future. We are currently training the IT Directors on the mechanisms for the SLAs and how they will be administered. Once the IT directors are trained they will begin to work with their agency director so the SLA will be acceptable to all. Steve said that he is hoping to get all the SLAs in place before the Legislative session.

Steve Hess said that he has a process at the University that utilizes an ITIL process for SLAs and he has a library of SLAs that have been developed over the years. Steve Fletcher mentioned that he would like to receive his assistance and that it would be helpful to the agencies because the concept of SLAs is very foreign to them and they don't have experience in this area. The option to fill this gap is to bring in consultants to train and coach our folks, while this is a huge effort it can be accomplished. Ed Ekstrom mentioned that in the private sector the next step is to build a roadmap for implementing services. It sounds like DTS is starting on their roadmap and will use the Strategic Plan as a basis for building the roadmap.

Ed asked how soon feedback should be provided from the committee. Steve Fletcher said that feedback is needed by the end of the month. Ed directed the committee to provide their feedback by December 23, 2005.

The meeting was then adjourned.